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WHAT THE WEST VIRGINIA EXTENSION SERVICE IS DOING TO AID FARMERS IN V E D  
ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio talk by F. D. Fromme, Dean and Director, Extension Service, Morgantown, West Virginia, delivered in the Land-Grant College radio program, February 20, 1935, and broadcast over a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations.

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A new problem was presented to the Extension Service in West Virginia with the coming of the national adjustment programs for agriculture. When a state produces less wheat, corn, and pork than is needed for home consumption, it seems proper to raise the question: Why reduce production in a deficit area?

That was our problem. From the national viewpoint the reasons for production control were good and sufficient, but when we applied them to West Virginia it seemed like asking a thin man to make a reducing treatment for the good of a neighbor who was over-weight.

Our group of specialists at the college argued the matter at length and finally agreed that perhaps a change of diet might help the thin man as well as the fat man. At least it seemed worth trying. With wheat at the markets bringing less than 40 cents per bushel, corn selling at about 30 cents, and hogs as low as \$3.00 per hundred pounds, conditions couldn't be much worse.

Now, that the initial stage of the adjustment is passing we look back at our part in helping to promote the control program with considerable satisfaction. West Virginia farmers who signed and will sign contracts for production control will share in approximately a million dollars that have been and will be distributed in the state in the way of adjustment payments. In addition, the income of farmers throughout the state was increased about two and a half million dollars in 1934 because of better prices.

The greatest value of economic adjustment for agriculture, however, lies ahead. For years we have been nibbling at the larger problems of balanced farming and land-use with indifferent success. We have preached home-grown feeds and foods, lime and legumes, pasture improvement and reforestation for steeper lands, and our preaching has in a large measure fallen on the thin soil of inaction.

The adjustment programs are proving new and effective tools for preaching the gospel of economic agricultural production. They make clear the inter-relation of individual farms to the farms of the community, state, and nation, and help farmers to take stock of their own operations and to plan better systems of management. In West Virginia nearly five thousand farmers are keeping records of their farm business for the first time. Many of these farmers are new clients of the Extension Service, and some have joined forces with their neighbors in their first cooperative adventure as a result of the adjustment plan.

Rapid progress in achieving some of the long-time goals now seems assured.

Economic adjustment has not only provided new direction for the program of better farming in West Virginia; it has also offered new opportunities for the

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Extension Service to aid the part-time or subsistence farmer.

Early in the depression, before national relief was begun, the West Virginia Extension Service saw a new field of usefulness in promoting relief gardens. Garden clubs were organized through-out the state and vast quantities of food were grown, canned, and stored for winter use.

Out of the experience gained from the work with subsistence gardens, homestead communities developed. These were followed by plans for rural rehabilitation with the aim of making dependent rural families self-supporting. Although other agencies have assumed the direction of these activities the Extension Service acts as adviser and carried a considerable share of the work.

The phase of land planning which aims to retire worn-out, unprofitable lands from agricultural use, and to provide better lands for people formerly condemned to live on poor lands, offers a further opportunity for social and economic adjustment in West Virginia.

On the brighter side, the possibilities of recreating some measure of the virgin paradise which was West Virginia's heritage prior to the day of the saw mill, the slash heap, the forest fire, and the polluted stream, has stirred the imagination of the nature lover and all forward-looking people.

National economic planning for recreation, reforestation, and better use of good land; for self-support by under-privileged people; for balanced production and more profitable farming-has brought new visions of usefulness to the Extension Service of West Virginia.

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